

# • FORUM •

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SIXPENCE

## PRESENTING THE POSITIVE CASE

In "A Positive Case" (August FORUM) Comrade Newell has touched upon an interesting problem concerning our propaganda.

Before dealing with the main idea of the subject, however, I must say that I think he is being a little harsh towards speakers. The aspects of Capitalism—Soviet Union, nationalisation, etc.—must be explained in OPENING propaganda and, as is more often the case, to answer questions put to the speaker. To party members it must seem wearisome—but it must be done.

There is no harm done by the negative approach, provided that the positive case is presented in a more explanatory vein. And this is where I join issue with our comrade. I, too, "think most people these days are more concerned with what the world could be like. . ."

Audiences have shown more attentive ness and interest lately. At a recent meeting half a dozen people personally commended the speaker for a lively and interesting approach to matter-of-fact, everyday problems. I think that reaction to the Tory and Labour Parties, because of their inability to really get down to major problems, is one of the main causes of this trend. Here again, though, the negative approach in 'holding up the mirror' is a necessary prerequisite to the constructive ideas of the speaker.

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I suggest that the questions of travel, mass production, places of residence, and so on, ARE important aspects of our case. The ideas of these things, though diversely held, can be proposed and discussed without fear of suggesting that we are "prophesying". We do not "know"—but this does not prevent us from examining and explaining the reasons for this or that form of travel; why mass production, so necessary under Capitalism, can be dispensed with under Socialism; why it is supposed that we should live in huge blocks of flats, in fact, why should flats be built at all?

When we advocate the abolition of a system of society that gives rise to war, poverty, the use of coercion, etc., we affirm with conviction that under the alternative we propose these things will not exist. But let some aspect of how we can conduct our lives with a view to happiness arise, then at once it becomes "too controversial", "futuristic", "utopian" or "idle speculation".

Yet these aspects of life under Capitalism, along with marriage, morals, etc., ARE contributory causes (flowing from the main causes) that result in the repression, suppression, unhappiness and frustration of humanity.

The increasing numbers of nervous breakdowns and neuroses, the 10 million aspirins a day, the "need" for such stimulants as phenol barbitone and benzedrine, are evidence that there is a crying need for a vastly different way of life.

Mass Observation records the apathy and disinterest of most people in "politics," i.e. dissatisfaction with the policies, and mistrust in the promises of political parties. "It doesn't mean that they are apathetic in their minds, that they don't care what happens. Probably more people care more to-day than ever before. But they feel they're out of the picture, that all the great hierarchies of organisation by which lives are increasingly ordained aren't really CONCERNED with them and their wants and needs. Leadership in general is becoming suspect, and with it the elaborate established machinery which leadership controls. This applies to the Churches as it does to the political parties." ("Puzzled People", Mass Observation, p. 151).

Religion can no longer supply any consolation. Then, with the growing influx of women into industry and the Armed Forces, and the consequent partial neglect of children, the family, as it was formerly known, is breaking up. What is to take its place is of keen interest to socialist and non-socialist alike.

On the sex aspect the raid on the polygamous community at Short Creek, Arizona in July was noteworthy. It is food for thought when we hear that a com-

munity earning its living from the land, condemned as "sinful" by the authorities, can gain much sympathy from people and admiration from doctors because of the wellbeing of its children, the absence of jealousy and (most important) the happiness that prevails. Even assuming that all their sympathisers looked upon polygamy as wrong, it is heartening to know that it was not prejudicial to their tolerance.

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It is my belief, then, that what some consider "crystal ball gazing" is not so. Modern problems fairly bristle with ideas for their solution.

We can, in our propaganda, deal with these ideas, both in writing and orally. The greater part of our audiences are composed of those who can accept lucid ideas regarding their problems. It is therefore necessary that comrades should come down sometimes from the "intellectual plane" and "meet the people," to explain and discuss in ways that they can understand. The need, nay, the demand that exists to-day for a change, however vague it may be in people's minds, is the cue for us to penetrate the apathy with ideas, to stimulate discussion.

Whilst people in the main are clear about the NEGATIVE side of Capitalism, they are still in the exploring stage regarding POSITIVE REMEDIES. They know the spirit in which the search for new remedies should be undertaken—working for the common good instead of individual profit. In their conception of Nationalisation as Socialism they reckon that a man who does not "pull his weight" is working against "Socialism". (This, Comrade Newell, shows the primacy of the negative case). Then if we assist in the "exploring" we are conscious that we are on their path, and that we and they are groping in the same direction. And so we cannot be "loath to discuss future socialist society".

With the broadening conception of what we mean by Socialism, and at the



same time anchored firmly to our principles and policy, is it not possible that we can "come down to earth" in discussion with those whose aspirations at least are parallel to ours? Instead of regarding the "socialist as a special kind of man," we may see every man as a special kind of socialist.

G. HILBINGER.

## CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors.  
Comrades:

I was amused (I have not yet reached the point of being alarmed) at the letter in the August issue, suggesting the possibility of allowing Capitalist adverts in the 'S.S.'

I am not quite sure whether the comrade really is serious or whether he is out simply to create further discussion and argument for the cussedness of it. If he is serious, then I am equally as serious. If not, then I suggest he devotes his time to more fruitful forms of writing.

He assumes as his premise that socialists are not against the capitalists as a class. The fact is that we are against the capitalists ONLY as a class.

He is probably quite correct in saying that adverts. would bring in a little money to the party—but at what cost, comrades? It is surely negative to boost capitalist enterprise for the sake of immediate gains and, in the process, lose all that we have stood for.

The so-called socialist press is a perfect example of advertising, e.g. 'Reynolds News', 'Daily Herald' and 'Daily Worker', whose columns advise the workers how to invest with profit, irrigate their intestinal colons, acquire perfect busts, find 'soul mates' etc. This may indeed provide some measure of amusing reading.

Seriously, comrade, we can always turn to the above newspapers if we have need for any of the things they advertise. In the 'S.S.' we find food for thought and socialist guidance.

I suggest that a poll be made on the topic and am prepared to believe that the party will provide the answer in no uncertain terms. I also believe that should, quite mad and accept the view suggested by Comrade Robert, then there would be a decrease in membership as a result.

Yours fraternally,

BRAIN,

Swansea Branch.

# SHOULD SOCIALISTS BE BIOSOPHISTS?

In the August FORUM H. Jarvis introduces a new study known as Biosophy. He defines it as "the science or art of living well in an environment which **appears** to be against one's health and happiness . . . the art of making oneself **adaptable**, of living in harmony with nature and evolution instead of against it." (emphasis mine).

Use of the word 'appears' always allows for a certain amount of doubt. As far as socialists are concerned, there is NO doubt that capitalism is against one's health and happiness.

Whether one is a socialist or not, one has to comply with the demand and supply conditions of capitalism. If those conditions mean, for example, that a worker can only earn a livelihood in the catering trade, then he must produce and sell tea, cola drinks, white bread, cakes, tinned foods—or get out! —

Jarvis then talks about 'adapting oneself to nature instead of living against it. Does he mean this to apply to present day conditions or to socialism? Under capitalism we do not merely 'adapt' ourselves to conditions the working class are COERCED. As Marx stated, "what we have to do is not to talk about the will of the capitalist, but to enquire into his power, the limits of that power."

This condition equally applies to the worker, whether he be a socialist or, in H. Jarvis's case, a 'biosophist'.

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Then he refers to the question of being against nature. Surely, since the beginning of human history man has always had to ARREST the forces of nature; to grapple with nature, i.e. to build dams, bridges, EXCAVATE (a word which Jarvis must detest) the soil in order to find various metals and minerals to make tools and other products; to fell trees in order to make shelter, furniture, sea and river vehicles which bring those precious fruits and nuts which the nature curists, cum socialists, cum (bio)sophists treasure so much.

Assuming that Comrade Jarvis's proposition of adapting and harmonising oneself to nature is necessary, this does not tell us how it should be done. The forces of nature are destructive, as well as providing sufficient food and shelter,

etc. for all. It is therefore not a question of being against nature, but of counter-acting the forces of nature as well, using the sources which nature provides.

Then he talks about socialists falling for advertisements urging people to eat white bread. This is not true. Most people to-day eat white bread because they like it and find it palatable. Whereas they find that whole-meal bread is more highly starched and, owing to its over-rawness, they cannot assimilate it so easily. This rawness is broken down in white bread.

Men and women engaged full-time as chemists, dieticians, and others allied to this type of work state that white bread has no serious or harmful effects on health. For example, in a recent test, a child fed over a considerable period with white bread was just as healthy as the child fed on whole-meal bread.

In recent reports it was stated that the agene which is used in the production of white bread caused frenziedness in dogs. But is it correct for nature-cure-socialists (biosophists) to claim that it will have the same effects on humans?

Towards the end of his article Comrade Jarvis remarks about the harmful toxins. No substantial proof is given to support this statement—only assertions made in "Health For All" magazine.

Comrade Jarvis's difficulty is that he is trying to run sociologically in both directions at the same time, i.e., socialism and nature-cure. This is clearly shown when he refers to the need to "get socialism and put the basis right". Yet further on he claims that "biosophy seeks to put right not only the social system but also health by understanding."

Understanding what? Is socialism or biosophy that will put things right, Comrade Jarvis?

In summarising his article it can only be stated that most of his remarks contain assertions, but not proof. If a person claims that eating meat causes ingrowing toenails then he or she must show substantial proof that this is the efficient cause.

I think it would be more reasonable for Comrade Jarvis to say that it is not any one cause that gives rise to social evils existing to-day, but a concurrence of causes.

D. BROOKS,  
(ex-Central Branch).



# WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF SEX

The 4th clause of our D. of P. refers to the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex. Fairly frequent statements on our attitude to the theories of racism are contained in our literature—in fact a whole pamphlet has been published on this subject. By comparison, however, the amount of space that we devote to explaining “without distinction of sex” is, to say the least, meagre. Yet it is equally obvious that Socialism will be brought about by men AND women as by white and black people. It is just as inconceivable that property society prejudices will continue to exist in the one sphere as it will on the other.

Perhaps it will be said that the distinction of sex does not have the same political significance as that of race. True, our critics less often question the ability of women to understand Socialism than the ability of negroes, for example. But we must not imagine, because race prejudice may be more often brought into discussions about Socialism than sex prejudice, that the latter is less worthy of being dealt with in our propaganda. On the contrary, it is just because prejudices such as the innate inferiority of women are more deeply rooted that they are taken for granted and not seriously challenged by the arguments of socialists, who may themselves be not completely rid of them.

It seems that the whole question of socialist views on sex matters is at present controversial. Some members think that the monogamic family will continue under Socialism, and others have different views on the association of the sexes. It is not, however, a mere matter of speculation and cannot always be dismissed by quoting Engels “what we can now conjecture. . . is mainly of a negative character, limited for the most part to what will disappear.”

The sex relations of people in any society, at least in their social aspect, are an integral part of the framework of that society. They must be a concern of those who wish to bring about social change they are part of our object, Socialism. And they are also entitled to be discussed in our propaganda, if for no other reason than that the solution of their sex problems looms larger in the mind of most of our audiences than do many other of the problems that we claim Socialism will solve.

The following notes can no doubt be amplified by members better qualified to discuss this subject than I.

Men and women are biologically equivalent and psychologically equivalent. Each contributes equally to the chromosomes of the child they produce. In primitive communism the matriarchal principle applied: all human beings are equal, since they are all the children of mothers and each one a child of Mother Earth. With the rise of private property, and the change from an agricultural, communal society to a herding, individualistic one, this unity was dissolved and superseded by the patriarchal family, which subordinated woman to man.

It is characteristic of any society in which one sex is dominant and the other subordinate, that all the useful virtues are arrogated to the dominant sex. History and anthropology show, however, that there is no such thing as a masculine trait or a feminine trait, as such, because the rôles have been completely reversed in different societies.

“Few people realise that in ancient Egypt the child derived its name from its mother rather than from its father, that older women married younger men, that men had to be chaste before marriage, whereas women were allowed a double standard; that a man had to bring a dowry to a marriage, and a woman had to swear to support her aged parents and those of her husband; that men used cosmetics, changed their fashions every season, and remained at home to watch the pots and pans, while their woman-folk were out running the business of the day, wearing the same tunic year in and year out, abjuring cosmetics as inferior, and even laughing at their husbands for their gossip and pettiness.”

(W. Beran Wolfe, “How To Be Happy Though Human”)

As far as Socialism is concerned, we can say that in general it will bring a return to the old matriarchal relations of equality, on a higher level. The present marriage institution is based on the economic independence of the woman on the man. This basis will disappear, and no binding contract will be necessary between the parties as regards livelihood. Children will no longer be regarded as the property of their fathers, and every infant that comes into the world will enjoy all the advantages on equal terms with all others.

The dissolution of the patriarchal family will bring a form of association between the sexes based on competition but on co-operation. A great deal of unhappiness is caused to-day by conditions in

which men seek to avoid the financial responsibilities of marriage and women seek to enforce their legal rights to maintenance or alimony. Sexual competition is a feature of property society, and produces many harmful results which a socialist society will avoid.

The tendency within Capitalism is towards the emancipation of woman in the limited sense of enabling her to compete successfully with men in more spheres of the production of wealth. This will lay the foundation for their equal participation in socialist society. Education and environment in general will erase those undesirable distinctions between men and women which constitute the battle of the sexes instead of their harmonious co-operation.

This is not to suggest that women will become more masculine and men more effeminate. It is the distinctions which are harmful to the development of human personality that will go. The prejudices about “a woman’s work” or “a man’s job” are doomed, nor is there any reason why the initial sexual approach should be considered the prerogative of the man while the woman “waits to be asked.” In short, men and women, by exercising freely their physical and mental faculties, will participate equally in every aspect of society.

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That is a tentative outline of what I think we should mean when we say “without distinction of sex”. It would be interesting to hear the views of other members on this question. Not as an interesting diversion from the accepted Party case, but as part of what should be accepted AS the Party case.

STAN.

## BOUND COPIES

We have had enquiries about when and over what period copies of FORUM will be available. The first fifteen issues (October 1952—December 1953 inclusive) together with a full index, will be prepared early in December. Since there are only 48 copies of each issue reserved for this purpose, we suggest that those who wish to make sure of their volume place an order with the Literature Secretary at H.Q., as soon as possible.

*We are pleased to acknowledge a donation of £3 from our comrades in the W.S.P., being a collection taken at their Annual Conference to assist in the publication of FORUM*



# ARE THE WORKERS BETTER OFF?

A simple question, you think? Most people would at once answer "Yes" and pass on to the next business. Then there are those who say this question does not matter, because it is "irrelevant."

This will not do. This question must be answered, not evaded. Evasion or acceptance of the popular view ("Yes") is fatal to the socialist case. Socialism is based on Marx's analysis of Capitalism, from which the following conclusions were drawn:

First, that Capitalism paves the way for Socialism, objectively, by the centralisation of capital—"one capitalist always kills many" and the

- (1) introduction of the co-operative form of labour-process.
- (2) conscious application of science to production.

Correspondence and articles should be sent to **FORUM, S.P.G.B., 52, Clapham High St., London, S.W. 4.** Subscriptions 12 months, 7/6d, 6 months 3/9d. Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to: **E. Lake, S.P.G.B.**

## FORUM EDITORS

At least two of the present members of the I.P.J. Committee will not be seeking re-election next year. For the information of our prospective successors we outline below the work of the Committee.

Receive contributions from members. Get them typed if necessary. Correct spelling and other grammatical errors. Count the number of words of each contribution to ensure that a correct total is sent to the printer. Provide titles where necessary. Check quotations from other FORUM contributors. Generally edit material in accordance with the writer's wishes or the Executive Committee's instructions. Write editorial articles and notes.

Send material to printer with instructions as to setting where necessary. Read proofs in galley form. Make paste-up for printer to work by (by cutting galley proofs into page form).

Answer correspondence from members and branches. Ascertain sales figures and printing costs, and report to the E.C. as required. Estimate number of copies likely to be needed each month. Arrange their delivery to H.Q.

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Blessed is man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us worthy evidence of the fact.

(3) transformation of the instruments of production into instruments only usable in common.

(4) entanglement of the peoples of the world in the market.

C.f. of Capital, Vol. 1. Kerr edition, p. 836 (summarised).

Subjectively, Socialism is pioneered by "the growth of the revolt of the working class; always increasing in numbers disciplined, united and organised. . . by capitalist production itself." (ibid. p. 837).

Why did Marx expect the revolt of the working class to grow? His answer is plain and straight, quite clear, and the only one that makes sense:

"As capital accumulates, the lot of the labourer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse."

(ibid p. 709).

As we know (from a glance through "Capital" or even "Value, Price and Profit") that Marx regarded the accumulation of capital as the chief law of Capitalism, it follows that he held that "the lot of the labourer must grow worse." He also evidently held that the labourer could get high pay and still be worse off.

The motive for the growing revolt is, therefore, bitter discontent with things as they are, NOT the attainment of what might be. It is when workers learn that their lives must get worse under Capitalism that they turn to Socialism, because there is nowhere else to turn to.

To make himself perfectly clear, Marx explicitly enumerated those factors making the working class revolt:

"Along with the constantly diminishing number of magnates of capital . . . grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation and exploitation."

(ibid. p. 836).

This statement has been referred to as "The theory of Increasing Misery". According to Professor G. D. H. Cole, Laski, Bernard Shaw, & Co., Marx has been proved wrong because the workers are better, not worse off to-day.

Marx gave the following evidence for his contentions. Under Capitalism

- (a) "All methods for raising the social productiveness of labour are bought at the cost of the individual labourer."
- (b) "All means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over and exploitation of the producers."

1. They mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrading him to the level of an appendage of a machine.

2. They estrange him from the intellectual potentialities of the labour process.

3. They distort the conditions under which he works.

4. They subject him to despotism.

5. They transform his life-time into working time.

6. They drag his wife and child beneath the juggernaut of capital.

(ibid. p. 708)

Having these points clearly in mind, we can now proceed to put Marx to the test, and answer the question "Have workers' conditions improved?" Facing up squarely to the fact that if the answer is "Yes" he and Socialism are OUT.

## THE "IMPROVEMENTS"

What are the data usually advanced in favour of the Labour-Fabian view? The following are typical, collected mainly at public meetings:

- (1) Shorter hours.
- (2) Greater mobility (transportation).
- (3) Consultation (joint committees and factory welfare).
- (4) Paid holidays.
- (5) Education.
- (6) Medical attention, and milk and meals in schools.
- (7) Unemployment insurance.
- (8) Retirement pensions.
- (9) Better housing.

In addition it is claimed that working-class people live longer and that working-class children are taller and heavier than previous generations of corresponding age.

Every one of these so-called "improvements" of the workers is an investment by the capitalists to increase workers' efficiency. So far from making their lives easier they make them work harder than ever before—for less.

The paid holiday, the medical attention and pensions are bought at a very heavy price of decimation and suffering. So intense is the speed of work today that three-quarters of a million physically fit workers were receiving mental treatment in 1952 (British Medical Association).

According to Dr. Bicknell, vice-chairman of the Food Education Society, the people of this country take 10 million aspirins daily, making a picture (in his words) of a nation tired and sick. The patent medicine advertisements show that occupational diseases like indigestion, constipation, "tiredness," influenza and cancer are universal and increasing. In the U.S.A. 100 million dollars worth of laxatives are swallowed yearly. The British Cancer Research Association



claims that one person in every six is a victim.

One fairly reliable index of the social position of the workers is the official returns of the Inland Revenue office. Using these returns the S.S. was able to show that the position of the workers after the Second World War was the same as after the first, "so that thirty years of change has produced no result whatever. 90 per cent of the wealth was owned by 10 per cent of the population in 1918, and still is."

A further index of the British workers' present economic position is the number of old-age pensioners. Four and a quarter million retired workers now draw 32/6d. weekly. So inadequate is this pittance that two million have successfully passed a stringent Means Test for "supplementary benefit" to keep them alive. Two and a quarter million are subsisting on "public assistance" while Great Britain is enjoying the greatest industrial boom of this century.

The shorter hours are nullified by the more intense pace. The workers' greater mobility gets them to the factory more quickly. The joint committee helps the employer to produce and export more profitably. The holidays are paid for, to recreate the exhausted worker for more work for the employer. The so-called education, for the great majority, is training for paid work.

The State distribution of milk to the children of the workers is the clearest evidence that their parents have neither the means nor opportunity of supplying their own offspring with the greatest need regularly themselves. Workers' children to-day are larger and heavier than their grandfathers were. So are cattle and sheep, pigs, eggs and tomatoes; and for the same reason—they are more valuable that way.

The workers DO live longer lives to-day—more years of grinding poverty. On 32/6d. weekly they enjoy more misery longer.

Foetid, verminous slums have been knocked down (where they have not fallen first) and replaced by blocks of flats or "buildings" because those living in the old property could not be efficient workers in such "housing" conditions, which also expose other workers to disease.

On June 2nd the *Economist* published a "Coronation Supplement" on the economic position of Great Britain for the last 50 years. These tables and graphs showed that, during this period, the productivity of the British working class doubled and the profits of the employers rose.

Where are the improvements? In 1900

the consumption of meat per head was 133 lbs.; in 1951, 75 lbs. In 1900 no margarine was produced—it was one of the "improvements" yet to be invented. In 1900 14 lbs. of butter per head were consumed; in 1934, 25 lbs. In 1951, 15 lbs. of butter and 18 lbs. of margarine.

In May this year the Minister of Food informed the House that one and three quarter millions were refusing to take their butter ration. When it is realised that this ration is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. daily, then it simply means that nearly two million "improved" workers cannot afford

the amount the *Economist* says their fathers at in 1900 (14 lbs. per annum).

Research was undertaken recently into the standard loaf. Evidence was adduced that agene gas being pumped into flour to increase oxidation in the digestive process to give workers "increased energy." The Canine Defence League warned members that dogs fed on this bread would develop hysteria. Rats fed on this workers' diet in the zoo in 1952 died before others given nothing at all.

Some economists (hypnotists would be nearer) claim that because the anomalous

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## MIND — A SOCIAL PHENOMENON F. S. A. Doran, Watts & Co. 10/6d.

As the title suggests, the main thesis of this book is that mind is an expression of brain function, and that its contents are largely determined by social forces. Dr. Doran uses the growth of medical knowledge from ancient Egypt to the present as his main illustration; other chapters are devoted to the nature, content and development of the mind.

The author notes that recent advances in physics, such as the "wave theory" of matter, have helped to break down the old dualistic concept of mind and matter. Biological and physiological research has shown the unsoundness of the orthodox view of a spirit-mind. For example, spatial patterns in the outside world are connected with the spatial representation of that world in the human brain, which is compared to a vast telephone exchange.

Dr. Doran traces the history of religious beliefs to illustrate the fact that other men's fears, hopes, beliefs, prejudices and values largely determine the content of the mind. The creation of Christianity is shown to have been only a reshaping of ideas inherited from the past. So great was the power of tradition in preserving the Christian-Aristotelean concept of the cosmos that it was not until 1822 that the Pope gave to the sun "formal sanction to become the centre of the planetary system."

Analysis of medical theory at different periods supports the view that the content of man's mind is determined mainly by his contact with other men, and not by spontaneous generation of ideas. This view has, of course, always been held by socialists, since the Marxian theory of materialism is based upon the reversal of the Hegelian dialectic of the unfolding of the Idea to account for the real world. Among many interesting points made in this chapter is that the early Christian

view of disease ("sent by God as a punishment for sin") constituted a retrograde step in the history of medicine.

The chapter on the development of the mind is rather technical, but it puts forward the idea that creation of thought is achieved by allowing the mind to brood over facts; man cannot see the cerebral process, but he can see the product. Perhaps this will help to answer the old objection "if Socialism is so good why haven't others seen it?"—they haven't brooded long over facts, and they expect to be given a process which cannot be explained except in terms of the product, Socialism.

The author concludes by showing that the growth of mind—defined as the interaction of material brains in society—is linked with the transmission of cultural patterns by tradition. His final blow at the Church is "in the Christian world—which believes in a God who loves Man—it is hard to understand why the minds of his chosen representatives on earth—the leaders of the Church—should have been permitted to harbour such false beliefs about the true nature of the physical universe."

In the restrained language typical of the true scientist, Dr. Doran remarks that "the main purpose of this essay is to try to demonstrate that if the mind is regarded as a social phenomenon then the materialistic hypothesis is strengthened, perhaps to the point where it does deserve the serious consideration of its opponents."

This book is one of many being written on subjects closely allied to the case for Socialism. It is obtainable through Head Office Library, which offers a wide scope of new and secondhand books for the deepening of members' and sympathisers' knowledge.



spent on cosmetics and tobacco have increased enormously, the workers' conditions have improved correspondingly. Since when has consumption of cigarettes and lipsticks been evidence of prosperity? Tobacco is mainly an unsatisfactory substitute for nourishing food—digestion requires leisure and comfort. Cosmetics are make-believe for real health.

Today the workers eat more adulterated food and substitutes than ever. "Plastics" are worn instead of wool and leather. Rayons from corn-husks have ousted flannel and linen. Unhealthy rubber and jute, shoddy but gaudy rubbish, has replaced the sturdy, lasting workmen's clothes of fifty years ago. The workers are not better dressed—they are showily dressed in pathetically cheap finery.

How is a working man, buried in twenty miles of filthy bricks and mortar like London or Manchester, "better off", if his only chance of a sight of the sea or country is to pledge his entire credit on a television set or small car?

A further case quoted is the millions

gambled on football pools. No clearer evidence of the poverty of the workers today is needed. Popular bets are PENNY points, against odds of millions to one.

If the American worker is prosperous because millions are spent on cosmetics there, then the people of Australia, where 9,000,000 buy 7,000,000 sets of false teeth a year (National Dental Congress) must be the most fortunate on earth.

Another favourite is house purchase. So far from indicating modern workers' prosperity, it shows the reverse. So desperate is the housing position of many workers to-day that they are ready to gamble their lives on endowment policies to get a place for their children to sleep and play in. The worker mortgages his life, gives up his pleasures and spends his paid holiday bricklaying or painting "his" mortgaged house.

In 1863 there existed a somewhat similar situation to that of to-day. As a period of staggering expansion of trade and industry it has never been equalled. The railways were being completed, and the world was opening up then. Glad-

stone, the Chancellor, referred in his budget speech to "the intoxicating augmentation of wealth, confined almost entirely to classes of property." Fabulous fortunes had been made in double-quick time. "The rich have been growing richer, and the poor have been growing less poor," he said, adding "that whether the extremes of poverty are less I do not presume to say".

What was the standpoint of Marx? What did he reply at a time when almost every speech and publication confidently predicted 'increasing, boundless prosperity'? In Volume 1 of "Capital" (p.716), and subsequently in the Inaugural Address of the International, he wrote:

"If the working class has remained 'poor', only 'less poor' in proportion as it produces for the wealthy class an 'intoxicating augmentation of wealth', then it has remained relatively just as poor . . . If the extremes of poverty have not lessened they have increased, because the extremes of wealth have."

The workers cannot be "better off". They can either be slaves or free.

HORATIO.

## PROBLEMS OF PROPAGANDA — I

This is the first of a series of four short articles on questions of propaganda that affect the Party. No claim is made that the examination is anything more than cursory, and the object is mainly to stimulate further discussion and criticism of the points raised and suggestions made.

First, what is propaganda? It is a special form of persuasion as a means of social control. According to Brembeck and Howell ("Persuasion") it comprises four general stages, which may occur in the following order.

- (a) to gain and maintain attention.
- (b) to arouse desires.
- (c) to demonstrate how these desires can be satisfied.
- (d) to produce a specific response.

These steps are often telescoped and interrelated. This particular sequence may not be applicable to Socialism, but it can help us to distinguish the various elements in our propaganda, so that we can gain a greater insight into how it has its effect. As far as we are concerned, stage (a) may involve the Party's literature and meetings, (b) is, broadly speaking, the desire to solve social problems, (c) is Socialism, the system of society and (d) may be the auditor's acceptance of socialist ideas, signified by his application for membership.

FORUM has already discussed what is a socialist (Rab, June issue), but not the

question of what MAKES a socialist. A common answer is that this the result of a socialist analysis of Capitalism. But that begs the question — how does a "socialist analysis" differ from any other? An answer that seems to offer greater scope for fruitful discussion is Rowan's concept of a socialist ATTITUDE.

What are the ingredients of this socialist attitude? Ideally, they are the sum of all the ideas that the Party propagates. In fact, however, they are a number of responses in a given set of circumstances. This is implicit in the Party's examination of applicants for membership. Certain more or less stock questions are asked, and the applicant replies along the lines that his experience of socialist propaganda has taught him. This propaganda, then, is not only instrumental in making socialists, but is also responsible for the kind of socialists that are made.

Let us look at S.P.G.B., propaganda as we know it today. To some members it constitutes the analysis of Capitalism and the call to establish a new society. A few put it that "you cannot analyse Capitalism without implicitly calling for a new society." To Trotman, for example, Socialism IS the class struggle (Delegate meeting discussion). Now, it is my contention that these are immature concepts—symptomatic of an early stage in

the growth of socialist ideas. A better way of understanding the matter is to regard propaganda as the means which advance the object (provided that we do not overlook the continuity of means and object) and to assess the value of propaganda in terms of closer approximation of people's ideas to ideas which belong to Socialism.

It is a popular view among members that the Party should in its propaganda first attempt to clear away incorrect ideas about Capitalism AND THEN proceed to talk about Socialism. This is based on a false separation—it ignores the unity of criticism and construction. It is precisely the presence of socialist ideas (i.e. discussion of Socialism) that breaks down prejudice in ways helpful to the advancement of Socialism. Analysis of Capitalism BY ITSELF is never socialist propaganda. It is never the analysis of the past or present that is the dynamic or revolutionary element—it is the concept of the object, pertaining to the future.

This is not to say that an understanding of Capitalism is not necessary to a socialist. But much more is also necessary. Everything that is controversial in the realm of Socialism (i.e. every attempted elaboration of 'common ownership, etc.') must be freely and openly discussed at all levels of understanding. This



is in order that general political controversy may centre around not Capitalism (1) versus Capitalism (2) but Capitalism versus Socialism. In short, everything that gets people talking about Socialism is useful to us.

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There is a curious prejudice in the Party that discussion about issues upon which these is disagreement among members is "confusing" to non-members. This doubtless arises because non-members, on hearing such controversy,

may be uncertain about what is or should be the Party "line" on it. However, it should be clear that it is not more confusing to discuss controversial issues than either of the alternatives, i.e. silence, or pretending that these is no controversy.

We have seen that both the propaganda and the type of socialist it makes are the product of certain conditions. Why, then, is the attempt sometimes made to narrow these conditions by a censorship on controversy? If there are two views among members on, say, mass production under Socialism, why shouldn't non-

members discuss them? It is more than likely that in examining the reasons for these views the non-members will learn more about Socialism than by listening to the sterile recitation of agreed platitudes which many members think of as Socialism.

We cannot produce the specific response we desire in our audiences (work for Socialism) unless we demonstrate how their desires can be satisfied (social problems can be solved). Necessary as it is to EXPLAIN Capitalism, it is incumbent upon us always to PROPAGATE Socialism.

S. R. P.

## EFFICIENCY — OUR GREAT NEED

Out of about 1100 members of our small party of good boys, 1000 are little more than passengers or inefficient mutts who contribute nothing to laying the foundations of Socialism. Few will like these harsh words, but fine words butter no parsnips, and the Party has never been a mutual admiration society, so let's face it. We have been correctly called "arm-chair philosophers"—quite a good term in my opinion, and still applicable.

F. A. Ridley (of late I.L.P. fame,) once stated that a real socialist party would have to combine the correct scientific doctrines of the S.P.G.B., with the enthusiasm of the Communist Party, plus the organising power of the Labour Party. Whatever we think about Ridley, or the Communist and Labour Parties, is neither here nor there. The Communist Party from time to time indulges in a little self-criticism—providing it has little to do with Socialism, as we know full well—but we need to indulge in a lot of criticism which should have a direct bearing on achieving Socialism. Our idea that Socialism will be obtained when the workers understand and want it can be a great impediment to Socialism, and lead many to accept the idea that we can do nothing, and must wait until the masses of the workers get moving.

Consider our own meetings—so regularly do they commence half an hour late that nobody wants to come punctually. A party comrade who has been abroad for 17 years turned up at a branch meeting an hour late quite recently, and frankly confessed that he knew from experience that it was never any good doing otherwise. He had learnt that 17 years ago, and assumed that it was still so. "Members can't get to meetings early as they have to work late." We have all heard it—an empty excuse. What about Sundays, for the same applies? The few non-party members we have who attend our meetings are usually those who are punctual. Does

this point matter? It would be very bad psychology to ignore it. We have all heard the challenge "You couldn't run a fried fish shop—how do you expect to run Socialism?" The honest answer is that we could not run Socialism, we would make an unholy mess of it if we tried, because we are a party full of inefficient and impracticable dreamers. The few efficient ones who do all the work are a drop in the socialist ocean!

One swallow doesn't make a summer anyway. What else can't we do? Well, we can't run a decent magazine and work up a circulation that will influence people after 50 years, and we don't look like doing it for the next 500 years. Is there anything else? Yes certainly—we can't run H.O. We decided to purchase premises and now find that it has nearly sent the party broke, and instead of these premises being a foundation stone on which to build a real, influential party, we find that they are a liability. They are as much good to us as a church is to its local members who make use of it one day a week. I know that one per cent of the Party helps to keep H.O. going, while 99 per cent do nothing.

What's the next grouse? Look at the audience of the average propaganda meeting and what do we find? Nearly all are party members—the converted preaching to the converted. How long will it take us to get Socialism that way? Our job, if we are to run meetings, is to get non-party members there. But how many of us ever try to thatch the hedge for the speaker? Go to any branch lecture and consider the composition of the audience. We can't all be speakers, or give magnificent propaganda orations, but we ought to be able to get a few outsiders to our meetings now and then. Listen to the way in which certain party members shout their heads off at one another and display in public for all to hear what bad psychologists they are. Watch how scientific many members of

the party are when they come to habits of living. Look how they who think that they have learnt how capitalism works, fall for its propaganda in other fields which happen to be outside the party's scope (i.e. in the direction of health).

The eyes of the world are upon us. We create our reputation in society by the way we behave and act. We build the type of socialist party of to-morrow by our acts and behaviour to-day. Those who scoff 'rubbish, capitalism determines it all' had better get up to date. History makes men, and men make history. Capitalism may produce the conditions whereby Socialism can be introduced—but we've got to know those conditions and be ready to act upon them, or capitalism will produce conditions which give it a new lease of life.

Behind all this is the fact that we must become far more efficient or we shall get nowhere, and our efforts will be like the seeds which fell on stony ground. If opportunity knocks once at the door, we've got to be ready to open it.

No offence comrades, no harm meant to those who have a dermis or epidermis whose average thickness is below what it should be for this integument.

H. Jarvis.

### ◆◆◆ INEFFICIENCY

'I suppose I must be the most Inefficient Mutt of all,' he confessed, idly making a paper dart out of a freshly filled-in Form E. "I always seem to get lumbered with some Party job I haven't the slightest intention of doing for more than the first week—if at all. It is extremely annoying to have to think up an excuse for backing out that sounds convincing and won't spoil my chances of getting my name put down for something else I can't do either."

"It's the meetings that really get me down," he continued, tearing up a collecting bag and gently polishing his par-



ty badge with it. "I know they always start half-an-hour late, but you must leave it even later if you are going to dodge that first half-an-hour or so when practically no one's there." The recollection of many too-early arrivals seemed to depress him. Absentmindedly he peeled off a leaflet from a pile he had forgotten to distribute, and started to write a reply to a member on the back—until he suddenly remembered that, after all, it was only that member's sixth

unanswered letter to him.

"I have made such a wide study of inefficiency that with very little effort I can fail to do almost anything," he said, with a note of pride. "Not content with simple omissions and delaying tactics, I have now reached a stage when I feel I can undertake wholesale errors of a more or less gross and preferably irremediable character. Such as . . ."

He was about to elaborate on this when he suddenly stopped, turning deathly

white. "My goodness," he faltered, reaching for an adjacent Guinness and upsetting it over the Branch books, "I nearly did it that time. If I were to tell all the secrets of inefficiency it could help the efficient enemy to take counter-measures. And that would really be my lot."

With that he lit up a fag, threw the match over his shoulder, and set fire to the entire stock of Branch literature.

P.R.S.

## ACCURATE THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION

The Declaration of Principles, upon which our Party was founded half a century ago, is an example of clear and easily understood English that we would find very hard to excel. As Capitalism is basically the same now as then, and it is the basis of Capitalism about which we are mainly concerned, we can hardly do better than model our propaganda on the English of the Declaration.

A man mixes with society for two reasons only—what he can give and what he can take. As a taker, i.e. consumer, he requires that GENERAL education common to all society, the ability to understand and express himself in the language of his fellows, together with an understanding of such means of measuring and calculating as are commonly used. As a giver, i.e. producer, he requires a SPECIAL knowledge of particular processes; e.g. an electrician needs to know all the implications of Ohm's law, a physician the mechanics of digestion, and so on.

Pick up a medical text-book and you will find it full of technical terms understood by very few laymen. Yet there is no problem in medical science, nor any science, beyond the grasp of the average worker who learns the elementary steps, one by one, which leads up to it. Medical science deals with conditions, and processes often lengthy and involved, which are the direct concern of a few specialised workers having their own terminology—a verbal shorthand based on a few Greek and Latin roots—and only because it is a verbal shorthand is it used. Those who are acquainted with these physical conditions and processes, and who also know certain Greek and Latin roots, usually find medical jargon self-explanatory. Similar comments can be made about a text-book on radio-servicing or boot-repairing.

On the question of Socialism, however, we leave the spheres of specialist knowledge and enter one common to all men. No one yet has any knowledge of Socialism except that it is a social system

wherein the means of living are the property of society and democratically controlled, wherein each exercises his particular abilities for the common good, wherein all dwell in abundance, and the evils we know to be the direct result of Capitalism will not exist. Any attempt to describe Socialism beyond the foregoing will tell an enquirer less about Socialism than about us, and he ought not to be encouraged. We can only assure him that he will have an equal voice in the direction of affairs.

The Socialist Party aims at converting the workers to our view of present-day society, which view is well summed up in the Declaration, and of making certain special political knowledge generally known. We have to use terms to which precise meanings are given: e.g. 'Capital', 'Value', exchange and use, necessary and surplus; 'Money'; 'Price'; 'The State'; 'Political Party'; 'Class', working and capitalist; etc., etc. These terms and their definitions are within the understanding of any worker, and ought not to be forgotten.

\* \* \*

What then is a socialist? A socialist is a worker who is:—

1. Politically intelligent enough to understand the Declaration of Principles.
2. Emotionally constituted to desire Socialism as indicated in the Object the Party.
3. Militant enough to enrol in the Party and see about getting it.

This is the triad, and only this, which marks off a Socialist from his fellow workers. It seems that the architects of our Declaration have done their work very well.

Such a Socialist would be expected to have a very decided attitude towards all the important happenings of present day life. Nevertheless, one cannot help being somewhat taken aback by the definition of "attitude" given by one writer in the

August FORUM as "an enduring organisation of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world", which definition is further enlarged upon. Surely every member of the working class knows that an attitude is a position adopted; a positive attitude exists when some action is being contemplated. For the sake, but if we must then it is just as essential to define with commonly understood terms as it is to identify a person with the name by which he is habitually known. Another recently mentioned "empirically observable facts". There cannot be many workers who would not understand the phrase "first hand evidence" (i.e. evidence of our senses and not that communicated by others) if such a phrase were used.

The first use of language is an instrument of our own thought. Defining a thing, or a process, with precision enables us to focus attention directly upon it to the exclusion of all other things and processes with which it may be related. We can then consider its relationship, if any, with other things near at hand and also clearly defined; and, finally, by marshalling all in their order of appearance, can the better detect cause and effect, and so arrive at a conclusion, i.e. a description embodying if possible cause and effect.

The second use of language is communicating our conclusions to others. The English language is rich in words having more than one meaning. We should always use the simple word of only one generally understood meaning—the one we intend—rather than ponderous verbiage which the reader will have to translate into his own simple language, and which he may mistranslate. Let us at all times do our thinking accurately by using the clear and easily understood terms of everyday life, and clearness of expression will naturally follow.

E. CARNELL